

WASHINGTON – Tonight, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) issued the following statement after the House of Representatives passed an amendment which would repeal the discriminatory policy of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT). The amendment is part of the National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5136), which is expected to be considered by the House tomorrow.

“It was with great pride and tremendous conviction that I voted today against bigotry and division and the end of Congress’ support of this morally repugnant policy known as ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.’

Let us remember that this is every bit as important to our national security as it is our civil rights. Since its inception 17 years ago, this nonsensical practice has cost us precious lives and valuable soldiers from the Balkans to Afghanistan. When we think about how many mission-critical troops and translators were cast aside by this policy, we remember that ‘Don’t Ask’ has undermined our national defense and unequivocally made the United States less safe.

I look forward to the day when the armed services permanently conclude this unfortunate chapter in our military history and our faith in equality and commitment to security can together take a giant leap forward.”

Earlier in the day, Quigley delivered [the following speech](#) on the House floor:

“Madam Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today, in support of Mr. Murphy’s amendment to repeal ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell.’

At its core, this is a vote against discrimination and division, a symbolic gesture to the country and the world that

Congress’ commitment to equality will always triumph over inequality.

As LGBT activist David Mixner said at the inception of this unfortunate policy,

‘they frighten our neighbors with the big lie.

They paint pictures that only contain dark colors.

They resort to the same bigoted arguments that have been used for centuries to deny every minority their freedom and equal rights.'

Today, we must rise up against these forces that conspire against progress and equality in every generation.

Today, it is our turn to send a message to the nation – Congress will never again sanction bigotry in our armed forces. Thank you.”

Video of the above speech is [available here](#).

Along with the amendment's lead sponsor, Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-PA), and other LGBT leaders including Reps. Barney Frank (D-MA), Jared Polis (D-CO), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Quigley has consistently urged leadership to move this repeal through

Congress and made public statements to the same.

Quigley is a member of the Congressional Equality Caucus and has been a [outspoken critic of DADT](#) and a [vocal advocate](#) for LGBT equal rights since his election to Congress one year ago.

Since 1993, it is estimated that over 13,500 troops have been discharged under DADT, including 800 mission-critical specialists and over 70 Arabic and Farsi translators. Several allies of the United States, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Israel, have allowed people to serve openly in the military since the 1990s.